Information and Cultural Centres in Indian Embassies

39. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all our Embassies and High Commissions are having Information and Cultural Centres attached;

(b) if so, names of Embassies in O.I.C. countries having Information and Cultural Centres attached and the nature of activities they are carrying on; and

(c) what are the steps taken up by our missions in O.I.C. countries to counter the Pakistan's anti-Indian propaganda?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Every Indian Embassy abroad has an Information Wing. In addition, Indian Council for Cultural Relations has established Cultural Centres in ten countries.

(b) In all the Indian Embassies in O.I.C. countries, there exists Information Wings. Of the ten Cultural Centres, established by Indian Council for Cultural Relations, four are in O.I.C. countries, namely Egypt (Cairo), Indonesia (Jakarta), Kazakhstan (Almaty), and Uzbekistan (Tashkent).

The Information Wings look after the information, publicity and cultural work of the embassies. Their regular activities include dissemination of publicity material including pictorial description, video films, pamphlets etc. to local dignitaries, prominent persons, opinion makers and academic institutions, maintenance of libraries in Indian Missions, arranging press briefings for visiting Indian dignitaries etc. The activities of Cultural Centres are to organise lectures, talks, films shows, exhibitions etc. on various aspects of India. Besides, some of the centres organise regular classes on Indian music, dance and yoga.

(c) Countering Pakistan's anti-India propaganda in the O.I.C. countries is an ongoing process. The Government and the Indian Missions continuously monitor such activities, particularly relating to Kashmir and the condition of Muslims in India. Swift, comprehensive and effective action is taken to counter Pakistan's false and motivated propaganda. Factual information is regularly provided to decision makers; the media; and the Governments of these countries through the Indian Missions abroad as well as through the Missions of the O.I.C. countries in India. The Governments of these countries are also briefed during visits of high level delegations to India and from India to these countries.

Passport Advisory Council

40. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Passport Advisory Councils in the Regional Passport Offices have been constituted;

(b) if not, the reasons for not constituting the Passport Advisory Councils; and

(c) by when the Passport Advisory Councils are going to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The proposal is under the active consideration in consultation with the State Governments concerned. The Councils will be constituted as soon as these consultations are complete.

Modification in the NPT

41. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has called for necessary modification in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)

to convert it into an instrument for achieving genuine non-proliferation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) In 1995, the NPT States Parties will be taking a decision regarding its extension. In statements at the ongoing 49th UN General Assembly, India has therefore urged the States Parties to use the 1995 conference to take necessary steps to convert the NPT into an instrument for achieving genuine non-proliferation. It has been reiterated that to be effective, such a global non-proliferation regime must be universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and linked to the goal of general and comprehensive disarmament. This is in keeping with India's consistent position that the NPT, in its present form is discriminatory and attempts to create a permanent division between the nuclear 'haves' and 'have nots'.

Sending Ambassador to Saudi Arabia

42. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post of Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia has not been filled up since two years;

(b) if so, the reason for not sending an Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; and

(c) when the post of Indian Ambassador is likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) No, Sir. The Post of Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia is vacant from 1st February, 1994.

(b) and (c) The appointment of an Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia is under process with the Saudi Arabian authorities.

Involvement of Pakistani Ship in Landing Arms and Ammuition

43. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Pakistani ship was involved in landing arms and ammunitions including RDX explosives, along the Gujarat and Maharashtra coastline as reported in the Times of India of October 13, 1994 and if so, what are the facts in this regard;

(b) whether three Pakistani ships also subsequently touched Porbandar and Vashad in Gujarat and Ratnagiri in Maharashtra;

(c) if so, what are the facts and relevant details of these cases;

(d) how many persons have been detained for these violations and what action has been taken against them, and

(e) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to detect such cases in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (e) Relevant information is not readily available and is being ascertained.

Visit of British and American teams to Jammu and Kashmir

44. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether British and American teams of Parliamentarians/Congress visited Kashmir recently to study the militancy in Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the impressions formed by them and the outcome of the plea made by some deputations for declaring Pakistan a terrorist state, as it had abetted and sponsored terrorism in J & K forcing lakhs of people to leave their homes and hearths to save their lives and honour?